Volume 17 No. 4 August 2006

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Aiding, abetting, and exporting crimes of war

The case against the Port of Olympia

by Marco Rosaire Rossi with Sandy Mayes

ADOLF EICHMANN: *...(A)t that time these crimes had been legalized by the state and the responsibility, therefore belongs to those who issued the orders.*

JUDGE BENJAMIN HALEVI: *But you must know surely that there are internationally recognized Laws and Customs of War whereby the civilian population is protected from actions which are not essential for the prosecution of the war itself.*

EICHMANN: *Yes, I'm aware of that.*

HALEVI: *Did you ever feel a conflict of loyalties between your duty and your conscience?*

EICHMANN: *I suppose one could call it an internal split. It was a personal dilemma when one swayed from one extreme to the other.*

HALEVI: *One had to overlook and forget one's conscience.*

EICHMANN: *Yes, one could put it that way.*

—From *The Record: The Trial of Adolf Eichmann for His Crimes Against the Jewish People and Against Humanity*, by Lord Russel of Liverpool, 1963.

During World War II, the German people were confronted with the dilemma of whether to obey the laws of the Nazi regime or resist in the name of a higher, internationally sanctioned legal and moral mandate. Increasingly, citizens and public officials in the United States today are confronting essentially the same dilemma: obedience to unlawful and repressive official policies versus resistance in the name of international laws—which have a greater focus on peace and human rights, and are sanctioned in our own Constitution. Just as Lt. Ehren Watada has cited his "duty to disobey unlawful orders" in his refusal to deploy to Iraq, citizens in Olympia are questioning the legality of the US war in Iraq and hence the legality of military usage of the Port of Olympia in the war's execution.

In late May of this year, Army Stryker vehicles and other military equipment from Fort Lewis were loaded onto the USNS *Pomeroy*. The use of our port to send troops, weapons, and supplies to Iraq sparked massive protest and civil disobedience from Olympia's peace community and briefly brought national attention to this small city. Now, a few months after the *Pomeroy* sailed off with its deadly cargo, a legal and ethical question remains for the people of Thurston County: Does allowing use of the Port of Olympia for military shipments to Iraq implicate the port commissioners in war crimes? If we are to take standards of international law seriously, the answer must be YES.

American ignorance

US citizens are largely ignorant of international laws and, sadly, of their own constitution. Ironically, this state of affairs itself reflects a violation of international law. All four Geneva Conventions contain articles which require nations to "disseminate the text of the...Convention as widely as possible in their respective countries." The idea is that a citizenry armed with knowledge of the conventions would be far less tolerant or compliant when governments attempt to circumvent or violate these laws, while addressing the tendency of oppressive governments to consciously keep their populations ignorant.

American ignorance of law is a major problem in the world today. US participation in international crimes is rampant, with officials from every level of government implicated in war crimes. Indeed, "little Eichmanns"—to borrow a misplaced phrase from Ward Churchill—are everywhere. Few officials in government question their own roles and responsibilities to international law and matters of war and peace.

International Law and "Use of Force"

The question of legality regarding military shipments through the Port of Olympia rests on the legality of the war itself. Chapter II, Article 2 of the UN Charter reads: "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." To reach this objective, the UN has put certain restrictions on the use of force by States. Foremost, all wars of aggression are considered illegal by Chapter I, Article 1 of the UN Charter. Use of force is only acceptable under two conditions: 1) if it is approved by the UN Security Council, or 2) if it is in self-defense as described by Chapter VII, Article 51.

Security Council approval. The first condition for the use of force by the US was clearly never met. The United States never even bothered to pursue Security Council

▸ **Port** continued on page 11

Boycott Bayview and Ralph's

The struggle to get legal prescriptions filled continues

by Janet Blanding

Protecting the rights of medical consumers to have their prescriptions filled promptly is looking more promising at state level. But locally, Olympia women are still facing hurdles to having their legal prescriptions filled. The Washington State Board of Pharmacy, in an apparent response to intense negative public reaction, has decided to revise its proposed rule that would allow pharmacists to refuse to fill prescriptions for any reason, including reasons of "conscience." The owners of Ralph's Thriftway and Bayview Thriftway, however, have proven less responsive to the community as they dig in their heels and refuse to change their unpopular policy of not stocking emergency contraception.

The battle over contraceptive access is being fought fiercely on a local level, as many irate Olympians have chosen to boycott Ralph's and Bayview. Picketing began at Ralph's on June 28 with a large turnout; at one point there were 120 people picketing the sidewalks on both sides of 4th Ave. and State St. On that first day, 130 people signed cards pledging to boycott Ralph's. During the next three weeks of picketing, another 220 Olympians pledged not to shop at Ralph's. Altogether, estimated monthly lost sales for Ralph's and Bayview total over $60,000 a month. Many others are boycotting without having had the opportunity to sign a pledge. Online pledges can now be made at the Plan B Oly website at *www.planboly.org*.

There are indications that Ralph's is feeling an effect. Most obviously, the number of cars in the parking lot is generally sparser than in pre-boycott days. Not all of those cars belong to shoppers, either; picketers have noticed employees are now parking in the parking lot that was formerly reserved for customers. One boycot supporter who has continued to shop at Ralph's because she has WIC coupons that can only be used there reports that every time she's gone into the store, very few other shoppers were present. Store employees, who have been instructed not to talk to members of the press, have told picketers and other community members that the boycott is having an impact. An unconfirmed rumor is circulating that employee hours have been cut back. Boycott organizers, concerned because the target of the boycott is the store owners' oppressive policy, not the stores' workers, have contacted the union, United Food and Commercial Workers, to discuss the situation.

At least eight women have had legal prescriptions for Plan B refused at Ralph's

▸ **Plan B** continued on page 4

CROSSWALK
A GROCER IS NOT A DOCTOR
BOYCOTT RALPHS
PROTECT HEALTHCARE FOR WOMEN
IS EVERY SPERM SACRED?
I DEMAND Access To
I HAVE Spent Thousands of Dollars Here Not one more cent !!!
Support Choice
BOYCOTT RALPHS
Respect women's Choice
Boycott Ralphs
PLAN B IS SAFE Birth Control
PLAN B IS BIRTH CONTROL

Protesters demand birth control. (photo by Krista Theiss)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *wip@zhonka.net* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool
The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Mission Statement
"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause
We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

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On the cover: Demonstrators march down State Avenue to the Port of Olympia to protest the use of the port to ship military equipment for the Iraq occupation, May 30. (*photo credit not currently available*) ***See related story on page 1.***

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline: August 25

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Lebanon, Israel, Palestine & the US role
Friday, July 28, 7:00 pm
Olympia Center, 222 Columbia St., Room B

A teach-in and discussion with **James Yee**, **Therese Saliba**, **Basil Shadid**, and **Simona Sharoni**.

What information are we not getting from the media that is essential to understanding the situation? And how is the US directly contributing to the conflict?

More details and related stories on pages 8–10.

Alliance for Democracy movie night
"Taken For A Ride"
Sun., Aug. 6, 6:00 pm. Traditions Fair Trade, 300 5th Ave.

Let's kill the trolleys and then install the car and highway society!! We'll be rich!! Join us for a film about the saga of corporate greed, political manipulation, and nationwide corruption for big oil, auto, and rubber. This is the story of how industry engineered the demise of public transit. Free and open to all.

Sliding-scale donations accepted ($5–$25). Light snacks sold. Discussion will follow the film. Contact the Alliance for Democracy at www.SoundDemocracy.org.

WROC Night Out
Mon., Aug. 7. Potluck at 5:30 pm. Meeting from 6–8.
First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE

Public speaking training: how to effectively talk to your community, the media. Sponsored by the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition. On-site childcare provided.

WROC Coffee Klatch
Mon., Aug. 14, 6:30–8:30 pm
Olympia Free School, 610 Columbia St.

Single parents support group. Join us to chat about the challenges and share information. Leave feeling more empowered. On-site childcare provided.

Support Lt. Watada as he faces his pre-trial hearing
Demonstration at Fort Lewis
Wed., Aug. 16, at I-5 Exit #119 bridge at the entrance to Ft. Lewis (the DuPont-Steilacoom exit). Supporters will gather at 4:00 pm for a vigil, with a rally to follow at 6:00 pm.

More information about Lt. Watada and the August 16 national day of education at www.thankyoult.org.

See page 11 for more details.

Works in Progress pizza party and fund-raiser
Friday, August 18, 7:00–10:00 pm
Fertile Ground Guest House, 311 9th Ave SE, near the downtown Timberland Library.

Help support Olympia's independent progressive monthly, now in its 17th year! Bring a hearty appetite, friends and spending money!

See page 10 for more details.

Annual Green Party picnic
Saturday, August 19, noon to 4:00 pm. Bigelow Park in NE Olympia (on Bigelow Ave between Puget and Garrison)

Children welcome (playgrounds, swing, etc)! Main course provided. Bring side dishes.

We are the party of Peace, Ecology, Social and Economic Justice and **REAL DEMOCRACY**! We are a values-based party that does not accept corporate donations. We can't be bought off like the D's and the R's. We're working for publicly funded elections, universal health care, an end to the occupations in Iraq and Palestine and much more. There are over 300 Green Party candidates running for office this year in the US. In our state, **Aaron Dixon**, former Black Panther leader, is our candidate for the US Senate. **Steve Garrison**, solar power activist, is running for PUD commissioner in Mason County and will hopefully be attending.

Join us! Don't end up being a Democratic Party shill. We hope you'll come and support this fund-raiser to help us move the struggle for ecological and social transformation forward. For more info, contact Chris at 705-3528

VICS PIZZERIA
360.943.8044
233 Division St NW

10th anniversary of welfare "reform"
Tues., Aug. 22, 11:00 am, WROC office, 701 Franklin St. SE

Sponsored by the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition (WROC). March with us to Governor Gregoire's office to present our mural showing the faces of the people she might be affecting with her full-family sanction policy. Help us continue the message that the welfare reform we'd like to see in Washington would include policies that support low-income parents to leave poverty, not policies that punish children and increase suffering.

Volunteer meetings are every Wednesday at 1:30. Contact WROC anytime! (360) 352-9716 or toll free (866) 343-9716, wrocoly@wroc.org.

Re-enactment of Gandhi's 1930 Salt March
Sun., Sept. 10, leave from the Capitol steps in Oly at 1 pm.

Gandhi woke up his country when he acted nonviolently and showed his fellow citizens that through simple actions (making salt rather than depending on the British monopoly), they could withhold power through non-cooperation and imaginative public witness.

On the eve of 9/11 and the 100th anniversary of Gandhi's practice of satyagraha or truth force (when he was still in South Africa before going back to his native India), **Bernie Meyer** as Gandhi will, with other truth-seekers, wind his way through Olympia, arriving at the Farmers' Market and the Puget Sound at the Port Plaza tower near the market. He will speak briefly on our urgent need for action and awareness in regard to global warming, peak oil, moral integrity and witness. A short ritual with salt water will reinforce how WE are salt of the earth.

Contact: Dr. Don Foran, foranfam4@cs.com, (360) 352-5733, or Bernie Meyer, berniemeyer2001@yahoo.com, (360) 570-0975.

Prayers for people in crisis
Monday nights (except holidays) 7:00–8:00 pm
De Colores Books, 507 Washington St.

Concerned for those suffering in hot spots around the world? Looking for a way to direct positive, conscious energy? Join fellow Olympians in offering prayers to those in crisis around the globe through disasters, both natural and man-made. Non-denominatioal—all faiths are welcome. Prayers from all traditions provided or bring your own.

New progressive Olympia radio station
106.5 FM, KOWA Community Radio
Listen at 106.5 FM or visit the studio at Media Island. We have meetings at 6:00 pm on Mondays.

We want you to be part of the team! KOWA is built by community members and serves community members. KOWA is currently developing content and vision and we can't do it without your involvement! Current programming is Good Music and Good News. Would you like to be a DJ? Make yourself some room at the studio. And we don't care what they say...we love techies.

Media Island, by the library. KOWA, in Media Island. You, in KOWA. Good Music, Good News, Good Community. Local Open-Source Radio.

Studio Line: (360) 352-1646, www.kowalp.org

Free rain gauges, rain sensors, and water saving kits
The City of Olympia offers free rain gauges to help residents and businesses measure how much water their lawns are getting. Also, free rain sensors are available to water customers who have automatic sprinkler systems. Rain sensors save water by electrically deactivating irrigation systems when it rains. Both of these devices are available, free, to City of Olympia water customers only.

City sewer customers can save water and money and reduce wastewater flow by installing free water saving kits. Each kit includes a low-flow showerhead, kitchen and bathroom faucet aerators, toilet leak detection tablets, and installation instructions.

To request a rain gauge, rain sensor, or water saving kit, call the City of Olympia Water Conservation Program at (360) 753-4444 ext. 8390. Quantities are limited.

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South Sound's Monthly Environmental Newspaper

Green Pages is a forum for individuals and organizations concerned about the integrity of our environment and the quality of life in our community.

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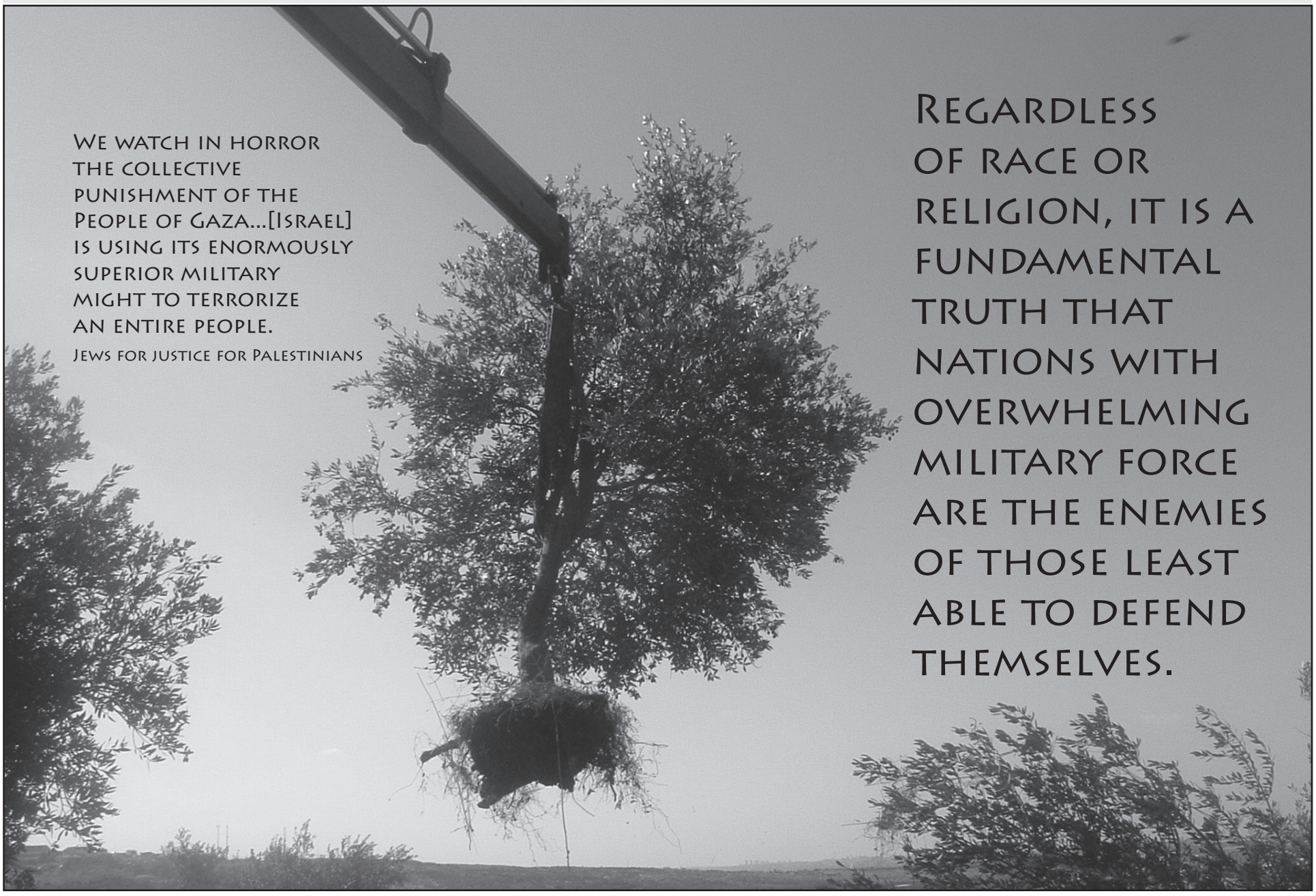
August 2006


We watch in horror the collective punishment of the People of Gaza...[Israel] is using its enormously superior military might to terrorize an entire people.
Jews for justice for Palestinians
Regardless of race or religion, it is a fundamental truth that nations with overwhelming military force are the enemies of those least able to defend themselves.

Dec 2004: Armed settlers uprooted 117 olive trees from a Palestinian orchard and sold them in Tel Aviv. photo by Christoph Gocke (EAPPI)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
...Palestinians can't suffer or feel pain or bear the weight of oppression; they simply fade away and are never heard of again. Reem Al Faisal		**1** **1834:** Slavery abolished in British Empire 2005: GW goes around Senate, appoints Bolton UN ambassador	**2** **2000:** WHO claims tobacco industry secretly campaigned to undermine its efforts and reduce its budget	**3** **2005:** Military junta overthrows Mauritania's US-backed president while he is at King Fahd's funeral	**4** **2005:** Israeli soldier unhappy with the Gaza pullout opens fire in Israeli bus killing four Israeli Arabs	**5** **1966:** MLK stoned in Chicago march **2005:** Canada announces it will soon have no-fly list too
6 **2005:** Former British Foreign Sec. Robin Cook who quit over Iraq War dies suddenly walking with wife	**7** **2005:** Netanyahu quits as financial minister in protest of Gaza pullout **2005:** H. Chavez ends cooperation w/DEA	**8** **2005:** Study reveals the median price of a home in the US rose 20 percent to $225,000 in just 18 months	**9** **2005:** SW Alaska Sea Otter placed on endangered list **1936:** J. Owens wins 4 gold metals in Berlin	**10** **2005:** Texas joins California, New Mexico, and Hawaii in having minority-majority populations	**11** **2005:** Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff is indicted in Florida for fraud in buying gambling boats	**12** **2002:** ABC poll: 57% support US invasion of Iraq; drops to 40% if there are "significant" casualties
13 **2002:** U.N. report reveals billions short of food, water **2004:** Oregon: 1st West Nile death of crow	**14** **2005:** Israel begins withdrawal from Gaza **2005:** Gasoline prices reach a record high of $2.53 a gallon	**15** **2005:** Department of Agriculture reports over 1,000 violations of rules meant to protect humans from mad cow disease	**16** **2002:** Sharon aide says Israel is urging US officials not to delay in a military strike against Iraq	**17** **2004:** The man who exposed the abuses at Abu Ghraib is placed under protective custody due to death threats	**18** **2005:** It's revealed Roberts, as lawyer for Reagan, argued comparable worth was "anti-capitalist"	**19** **2004:** Sen Ted Kennedy says he was questioned 5 times in airports last March because he was on the no-fly list
20 **2005:** Utah television station refuses to air anti-war ad with Cindy Sheehan saying viewers won't like it	**21** **2005:** Joan Baez performed a free concert for anti-war protesters camping out near GW's ranch	**22** **2005:** US Attorney's Office sends out memo that warns terrorists might pose as homeless people	**23** **2005:** A review of medical evidence finds fetuses likely do not feel pain until around the 28th week	**24** **2005:** Justice Dept says pulled over Black/Hispanic drivers more likely to be searched, handled roughly	**25** **2004:** Prosecution witness testifies Iraqi inmate who died at US detention camp was hit and kicked by Marines	**26** **2005:** The Jewish population of the West Bank in last year increased by 12,000 (five percent)
27 **2002:** Report shows 1 in 3 children in WA live in poverty, 3/4 of poor families headed by working adults	**28** **2005:** Crude oil futures rise to more than $70 a barrel as Hurricane Katrina approaches the Gulf Coast	**29** **1997:** Feds say Ex-lax linked to cancer **2005:** Katrina leaves New Orleans; city seems to have been spared	**30** **2005:** Floodwaters from breached levees flood New Orleans **2005:** FBI to search for radicalized prisoners	**31** **2005:** LA gov orders New Orleans evacuation **2005:** Katrina's storm surge is reported to be tallest in US history	Following the events of 25 June, including the capture of Corporal Gilad Shalit, Israel has carried out numerous military interventions in Gaza. According to UN sources, more than 100 Palestinians have been killed, including 18 children. Almost 400 Palestinians have been injured, including 108 children. Arabic News	

▸ **Plan B** continued from page 1

in the last six weeks. I went into Ralph's pharmacy in late June with a prescription for emergency contraception. To my surprise, the pharmacist, Stan Berdinka, was kind and apologetic as he explained why he could not fill my prescription. He told me that he was "terribly embarrassed" that he was unable to fill my prescription, and stated in no uncertain terms that he had not been consulted about the store policy against stocking emergency contraception and that he was not in agreement with it. He provided me with a list of pharmacies in the area which generally stock Plan B, and suggested I try Fred Meyer. Other women whose prescriptions were refused at Ralph's reported that they were similarly treated in a polite and apologetic manner, although in one puzzling incident, a woman was told that her prescription could not be filled "because the computers are down."

Before we left Ralph's, my male partner approached the pharmacy counter and asked the pharmacist if they carried condoms. The pharmacist seemed amused, and directed him to the register at the front of the store, where the condoms are kept in a locked glass case, along with cigarettes. We left Ralph's without my emergency contraception. Afterwards, I had it filled at the Walgreens in Lacey.

Stan Berdinka, Ralph's managing pharmacist, later made outspoken comments to the *Olympian*. While he did not disparage his employer in any way, he clearly stated that he believed it is appropriate to fill all legal prescriptions. For a period in July, the Ralph's Thriftway sign, which usually advertises sale items, read, "Thanks for your support. Hiring pharmacist top salary." Aside from this unorthodox approach to seeking a professional pharmacist, this public message has given rise to speculation that Berdinka quit or was fired. However, in a recent phone conversation, he told me that although he is planning to move out of state in the near future, he continues to work at Ralph's part-time while the store owners seek a replacement.

Samantha Margerum's struggle to have her prescription for Plan B filled illustrates the need to make this time-sensitive medication more widely available. A resident of downtown who does not own a car, Sam was able to find a friend who could drive her to her nearest pharmacy, Ralph's. When her prescription was turned down there, she and her friend drove to the next nearest pharmacy, Albertsons, where the pharmacist reported Plan B was out of stock. (A spokesperson at Albertsons corporate headquarters insists that Albertsons has no corporate policy against stocking Plan B. However, at least three women have had legal prescriptions for Plan B refused at two local Albertsons, always because they were "out of stock.")

> Store employees, who have been instructed not to talk to members of the press, have told picketers and other community members that the boycott is having an impact.

At the recommendation of the Albertsons pharmacist, Sam next tried to fill her prescription at Walgreens in Lacey (where I myself finally obtained Plan B). At Walgreens, a pharmacy tech told Sam to return in 20 minutes to pick up her prescription. However, when she returned, an apologetic pharmacist told her that they were out of stock. The prescription was transferred to the West Olympia Walgreens. Although the pharmacist at Walgreens was gracious and accommodating, the freeway was clogged with rush hour traffic and traveling through downtown was slowed by the presence of Lakefair. Altogether, it took Sam over two hours to get her prescription filled; using public transportation, it could easily have taken twice as long.

The anti-choice activists have joined boycotters on the picket line. Although Plan B is clearly a contraceptive, comprised solely of a synthetic hormone, pro-boycott picketers have become accustomed to being called "baby killers" by fanatics whose faith apparently makes facts irrelevant. These Ralph's supporters have confused the public driving by, who often assume that they are part of the crowd of boycotters, as many of their signs refer to choice. (Apparently, choice is a good thing when exercised by male store-owners.) One particularly puzzling incident involved an anti-choicer shouting at passing motorists: "Support women and children. Shop at Bayview!" It was not explained how shopping at stores where women's access to contraception is restricted supports women and children.

The anti-choicers also appear to be turning out to shop at Ralph's. Churchgoers have been exhorted to bring their grocery business to Ralph's to show their support for the Stormans, and picketers have noted that the demographics of the shoppers entering and exiting Ralph's parking lot seem to have changed. There are more large vehicles, more large families, and fewer groceries in their hands as they leave than one would have expected from the typical Ralph's shopper in former days. One picketer told me that she had a co-worker driving in from Tenino to shop at Ralph's because her priest encouraged her to support the Stormans' "moral stand." Gas is expensive and Ralph's prices are high; how long can people continue to support Ralph's at the expense of their own family budget?

While a few boycotters pledged to boycott Ralph's and Bayview for just the month of July, most are committed to boycotting until emergency contraception is stocked. In an effort to support carless boycotters, a twice-weekly "Carpool to the Co-op" has been organized, with carpools meeting under the Ralph's sign on Thursdays from 5 to 7 pm, and at Bayview at a yet undetermined time. For more information, contact *planbcarpool@yahoo.com*. Plan B Oly has planned large pickets for August. For the schedule and other updates, check the *planboly.org* website, or send contact info to *planboly@hotmail.com* to be placed on the mailing list.

At the state level, the struggle to protect a consumer's right to have all legal prescriptions promptly filled has been progressing favorably. At the Pharmacy Board meeting on July 20, Executive Director Stephen Saxe announced that the Board had received 2450 public contacts on the issue of the current draft code, which would allow pharmacists to refuse to fill any prescription for any reason. The overwhelming majority of contacts had been negative. He also mentioned that feedback had been received from legislators and the governor, expressing concern about the impact of adopting the draft. The Pharmacy Board missed a filing date with the code reviser, because some board members requested alterations to the draft before adopting it. Because this deadline was not met, adopting the code as drafted at the August 31 meeting is no longer possible. The Board is now scheduled to revisit the draft code at that meeting.

Donna Dockter, the Seattle pharmacist and pharmacy owner who has been the driving force for code that allows pharmacist refusal, seems to have lost support among her fellow board members. An interesting study in contradictions, Dockter sells emergency contraception without a prescription in her Sand Point pharmacy, yet she has championed the cause of pharmacist refusal. Rumor has it that her desire to allow pharmacists so much power in choosing whether or not to fill prescriptions has more to do with professional vanity than a desire to limit access to any particular drug, such as Plan B. At the July 20 meeting, Dockter lamented the media's representation of the draft code, insisting that its basic intent was to ensure that pharmacists were able to provide quality patient care. The overwhelmingly negative public input to the Pharmacy Board, she believed, was based on a lack of information. She had a prepared statement, characterized as a "public education piece," that she wished to read into the record. However, a motion was made, seconded and carried that this statement not be read. Clearly, the rest of the Pharmacy Board is backing away from Donna Dockter and her heavy-handed and unpopular insistence on pharmacists' rights over patients'.

Nancy Sapiro, an attorney with the Northwest Women's Law Center, was pleased with the Board's turnaround, and is hopeful that when the Pharmacy Board meets again, it will move forward with draft code that is "clear and concrete." When the language is unclear, as it was in the draft that created so much public objection, she explained, "it's difficult for the Pharmacy Board to enforce and discipline violators. Rule-making needs to be black and white."

An attorney with Planned Parenthood, Kelly Reese, said she hopes to see a revised draft that clearly states that "the pharmacy has a duty to dispense drugs as prescribed." She further noted that charging a pharmacist with a duty to dispense "does not diminish the pharmacist from using his or her professional judgment. Professional judgment puts the patient first." Nancy Sapiro agreed, noting that "Professional judgment must be distinguished from moral judgment." When asked about the situation in Olympia, where a pharmacy owner is refusing to stock emergency contraception, Sapiro responded that she believes the current WAC states that if there is a demonstrated need, the pharmacy owner needs to stock. However, she feels that the confusion over this situation "illustrates the need for clear black and white language."

Seven Olympia women will file complaints with the Pharmacy Board on July 31. The complaints will detail their failed attempts to fill legal prescriptions for Plan B at Ralph's Thriftway Pharmacy, Albertsons, and in one instance, Walgreens. There have been grumblings that the Pharmacy Board tends to take a lackadaisical attitude toward disciplining pharmacies that violate code, and that complaints are sometimes overlooked. It will be interesting to see, in light of its embarrassment over the public outcry regarding pharmacist refusal, what disciplinary actions the Pharmacy Board chooses to take against Ralph's and Albertsons. Let's hope the Board of Pharmacy chooses to demonstrate its commitment to patient care and protects the rights of medical consumers to have prompt access to their prescribed medication.

Alysia Angel expresses her feelings about mixing medicine and religion. (photo by Krista Theiss)

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Nazis go home—by themselves

National gathering of "racialists" is outnumbered by people wearing multicolored wigs

Nazis, standing on the steps, were prevented from joining the clown party. (photo by Zoltan Grossman)

Demonstrators chanted, "This is what stupidity looks like!" and "Nobody's watching!" (photo by Lee Gilchrist)

by Peter Bohmer

OLYMPIA—On Monday, July 3, more than 600 concerned community members from Olympia and the surrounding Puget Sound region rallied to oppose the presence of a neo-Nazi group called the National Socialist Movement (NSM).

Our rally began at 1:30 pm at the Washington State Capitol campus, near the steps of the Legislative Building, and concluded a little before 4:00 pm, when the NSM left. The NSM had only thirteen members for their rally, although they invited all their members and other white supremacists from California and the Northwest to join them. Their main speaker was Sean Stuart, a member of the NSM running for the Montana State Legislature as a Republican. 150 state police guarded them and faced us in what proved to be a waste of taxpayers' money and an unnecessary presence. Additionally, the police put up a fence to separate the NSM from our peaceful rally. This is the fourth time these neo-Nazis have targeted Olympia, and their small turnout shows their utter failure to recruit new members and mobilize other racists. Hopefully, this is the last time they come here.

We turned our backs on them and turned their rally of hate for Blacks, Jews, and immigrants into one for justice, diversity, and equality. Anti-racist clowns attended, making fun of the neo-Nazis. The Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, a long-time justice and anti-war group, played a central role in spearheading the organizing necessary for our rally. Other organizations and individuals joined us in seizing this opportunity to demonstrate, with a fundamental goal of building a sustainable and ongoing movement working for racial, economic, and social justice. We challenged and will continue to challenge the Nazis and all forms of racism and inequality, whether it comes from inside our community, from corporations, or the White House.

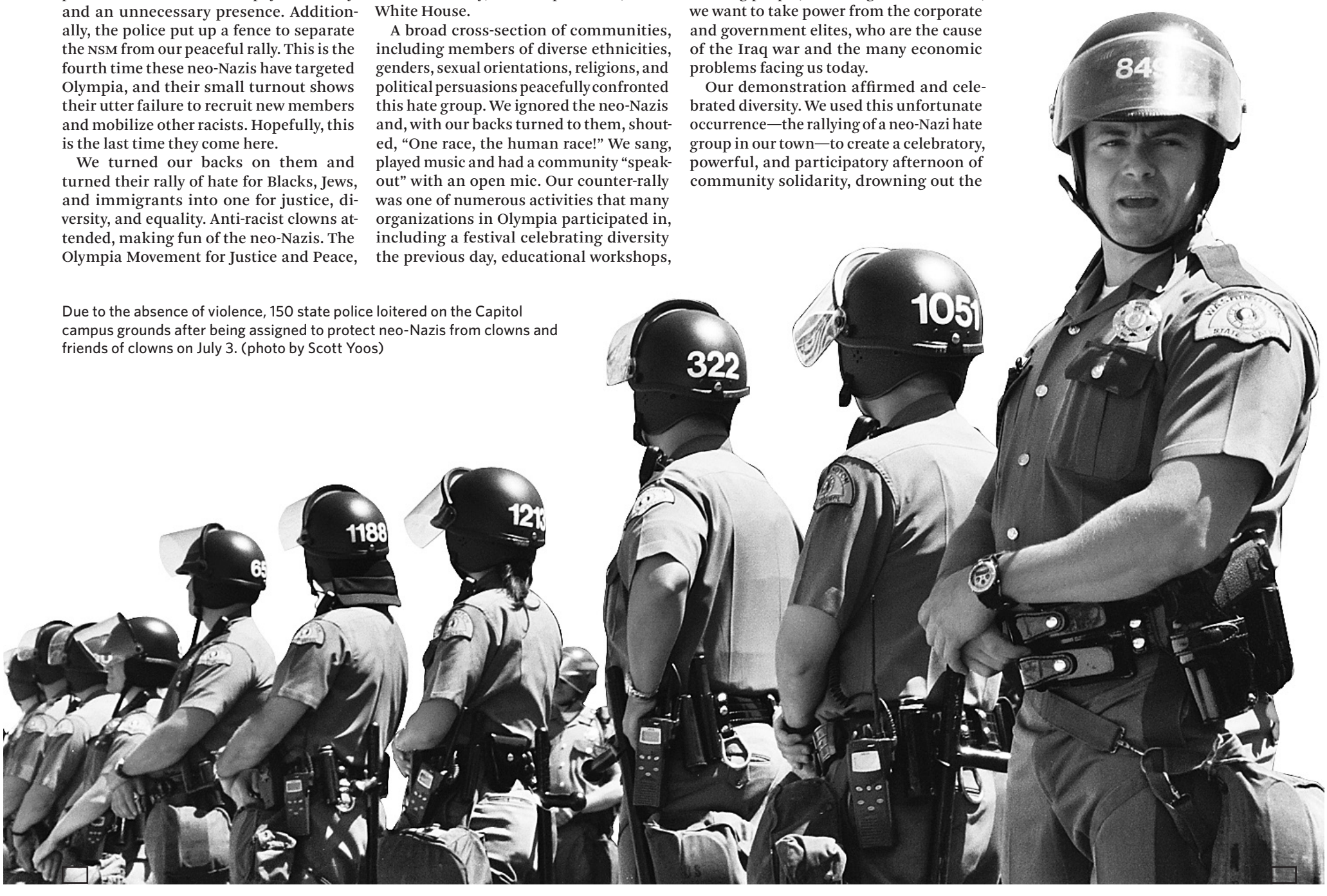
> It is a step on the path of forming an environment of unity and compassion, of turning their rally of hate into one for racial, economic and social equality.

A broad cross-section of communities, including members of diverse ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and political persuasions peacefully confronted this hate group. We ignored the neo-Nazis and, with our backs turned to them, shouted, "One race, the human race!" We sang, played music and had a community "speakout" with an open mic. Our counter-rally was one of numerous activities that many organizations in Olympia participated in, including a festival celebrating diversity the previous day, educational workshops, outreach, and community organizing.

The National Socialist Movement (NSM), one of the more active white supremacist groups, has been trying to reach out to disaffected white youth by scapegoating immigrants, Black people, Jews, gays and lesbians, and disabled people. While recognizing and committing ourselves to challenging and changing this unequal economic system, where poverty, inequality and economic insecurity are growing, our foundation must be solidarity among all oppressed people. By working for single-payer health care, immigrant rights, a living wage, full employment, free quality education for all, a progressive tax system, reproductive rights, and opposition to the war, we further the interests of all working people, including whites. United, we want to take power from the corporate and government elites, who are the cause of the Iraq war and the many economic problems facing us today.

Our demonstration affirmed and celebrated diversity. We used this unfortunate occurrence—the rallying of a neo-Nazi hate group in our town—to create a celebratory, powerful, and participatory afternoon of community solidarity, drowning out the negative message promoted by the NSM. It is a step on the path of forming an environment of unity and compassion, of turning their rally of hate into one for racial, economic, and social equality.

Many people in Olympia have argued that we should just ignore the neo-Nazis—that confronting them only gives them publicity, which is what they are seeking. However, directly challenging these white supremacists energized and brought people together to stand up for human rights and against bigotry. The challenge is to carry that energy forward.



Due to the absence of violence, 150 state police loitered on the Capitol campus grounds after being assigned to protect neo-Nazis from clowns and friends of clowns on July 3. (photo by Scott Yoos)

BUSH'S NEW CUBA PLAN

Embargoes, blacklists and assassination plots

by Wayne S. Smith

In May of 2004, the Bush Administration's Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba issued an almost 500-page report that seemed to conclude that the Castro government was virtually at the point of collapse. Just a few more nudges—a few more Radio Marti broadcasts, denials of a few more travel licenses, and support to a few more dissidents—and it would all be over. The United States, the report seemed to suggest, would then come in and show the Cubans how to operate their schools properly, make their trains run on time, and grow their crops more efficiently. It was envisaged as such a US-run operation that in July of 2005, a US transition coordinator was appointed. One skeptical observer noted at the time that in the case of Iraq, the Bush Administration had at least waited until it invaded and occupied the country before appointing a transition coordinator. Did his appointment in this case mean the US intended to invade Cuba as well? And if not, what was the US transition coordinator supposed to do from his office in the State Department building? Even today, that remains unclear.

Perhaps OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza's reaction to the idea of a US transition coordinator for Cuba summed it up best. "But there is no transition," he said, "and it isn't your country."

Indeed, the transition plan put forward in 2004 had such a "made-in-the-USA" tone to it that it backfired in Cuba. Even Cubans who had their disagreements with the Castro government did not want to be told by the United States how they should run their country. Leading dissidents described the new approach as counterproductive. Elizardo Sanchez of the Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, for example, noted that the US policy announced in 2004, "has had an effect exactly the opposite of the one you should want."

Cuba's Catholic Bishops also disagreed with the US approach, saying its measures "threaten both the present and the future of our nation."

Nor did many Cubans agree with the idea that they should give up free health care and education, and various other services provided by the government.

The new report

Now the Commission has issued a new report, at a ceremony on July 10 presided over by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Commerce Secretary Gutierrez, and Transition Coordinator Caleb McCarry. Interestingly, perhaps in response to charges that the first report was nothing but an American occupation plan, the new one stresses that its purpose is, rather, to offer assistance to Cubans on the island. Solutions must come from them, it insists. The United States simply stands ready and willing to support their initiatives. But having said that, the report then goes on with page after page of recommended actions, from reorganizing the economy and the educational system to the holding of multiparty elections—always provided, of course, that Cubans on the island wish to initiate them!

And the basic premise, that the regime is on the verge of collapse, is as pronounced and as unrealistic in the new report as in the old. Two years have passed and rather than collapsing, the Cuban economy has shown strong signs of reinvigoration. Even the CIA gives it a growth rate of 8%. Cuba has new and vitally important economic relationships with Venezuela and China and indications of an important new oil field off the north coast, for which various nations are bidding for drilling sites. Things are looking up, not down.

There is no indication of that in the new report, however. Rather, it says: "Chronic malnutrition, polluted drinking water, and untreated chronic diseases continue to affect a significant percentage of the Cuban people." And of course adds that: "Conditions will not improve as long as Fidel Castro remains in power."

> Even Cubans who had their disagreements with the Castro government did not want to be told by the United States how they should run their country.

Never mind that UN indices consistently indicate Cuba's population to be considerably healthier than those of most neighboring states, including the US territory of Puerto Rico—one reason being that they have free health care. It is interesting to note also that life expectancy for Cubans is five years longer than for African-Americans!

Funds diverted for international meddling

Whatever the earnings produced by the Cuban economy, the report insists they are used not for the Cuban people, but for nefarious purposes. "The revenue does not go to benefit the Cuban people," the report insists, "but is diverted to maintain the regime's repressive security apparatus and fund Castro's interventionist and destabilizing policies in other countries of the Hemisphere. The Castro regime's international meddling is done at the expense of the needs of the Cuban people."

First of all, if this were so, if funds had been so massively diverted, Cubans would no longer have free health care and education and other social-welfare programs would have long since collapsed. That they have not is evidence that the report's allegations are false. Further, it provides no example of this "international meddling" to which such a huge share of the Cuban economy is supposedly being channeled. Cuban doctors have been sent to many other countries, including Guatemala and Haiti, in addition to Venezuela and Bolivia. They have been praised on every occasion for their excellent and selfless assistance. If this is the meddling to which the report refers, there should be more of it. If it is not, then the report should provide examples of the interventionist actions to which it has reference.

Prevent succession

When Castro passes from the scene, he will, under the Cuban Constitution, be succeeded by the Vice President. At this point in time, that is Raul Castro. There will be many within that new leadership structure, and many within Cuban society, arguing for political and economic reforms—just as there will be other voices opposed.

The principal objective of the Bush Commission's new plan, however, is to prevent the succession altogether, calling on Cuban citizens and the international community to reject the government that would replace Castro under the Cuban Constitution and to insist instead on an entirely new one. But neither the Cuban people nor the international community are likely to take so frontal a position against a successor regime. Change, rather, will have to come about slowly and as the result of an internal process, not as the result of a formula imposed from abroad—and certainly not one imposed by the United States. As Oswaldo Paya, one of Cuba's leading dissident leaders, stated a few weeks ago in anticipation of the publication of this second report: "We do not accept transition programs made outside of Cuba."

Measures to block succession

The Bush administration's objective, as stated in the new Commission report, is to see to it that "the Castro regime's succession strategy does not succeed," but the measures put forward to achieve that goal are as inadequate as were those put forward two years ago to bring an end to the Castro government.

Expanded broadcasting

The new report, for example, calls for increased Radio and TV Marti broadcasting and an expansion of third-country broadcasting. But the broadcasting already conducted over the past two years, of one kind or the other, hasn't had any appreciable effect on public opinion. More of it isn't likely to have any more.

Support for dissidents and civil society

The report two years ago called for support to dissidents and representatives of "civil society" as a means of confronting the government. The new report calls for more of the same, and even for the establishment of an $80 million fund to increase that support. But as in an earlier report we quoted one dissident on the island summing up the effect of that support: "The good news is that most of that money remains in Miami; the bad news is it makes our position more difficult even so."

What he meant is that much of the money is given to organizations in Miami, some of it, supposedly, to pass on to groups in Cuba, but that little in fact gets through; it stays with those in Miami. Further, when the US says its objective is to bring down the Cuban government, and then says that one of its means of accomplishing that is by providing funds to Cuban dissidents, it in effect places them in the position of being the paid agents of a foreign power seeking to overthrow their own. Inevitably, that puts them in an even more difficult position and severely limits their effectiveness.

That will be no less true now than in the past. The new fund, in short, is not likely to have any greater impact than did the old one, especially as, as noted above, many of the dissidents themselves do not agree with the US action plan. It should be noted, for example, that one of Cuba's leading dissidents, Oswaldo Paya, on July 1 of this year, published an opinion piece in The Washington Post emphasizing that Cubans wanted to preserve the right to free health care and education—something at odds with the recommendations in the original Commission report. Paya has also said he wants the US embargo to end and for Americans to be allowed to travel to Cuba, a position that has enraged hard-line exiles in Miami.

Curtail travel

Measures were introduced two years ago to sharply reduce the travel of Americans and especially Cuban-Americans, and to curtail remittances and parcel deliveries. Claiming that these measures have had great success, the new report calls for their strengthened implementation. But while the new restrictions on the travel of Americans and Cuban-Americans to the island have of course reduced revenues from that source, overall revenues from tourism have not fallen, since Canadians, Europeans and Latin Americans (especially Venezuelans) have continued to travel in even greater numbers.

Moreover, this is a problem with several dimensions. It had long been an article of faith, for example, that the best way to get the message of American democracy abroad was through the travel of American citizens. Does reducing their travel to Cuba, then, not work at cross purposes with the broader objective of encouraging change in Cuba? And whether the pain caused to divided Cuban-American families is worth the few millions denied to the Cuban government is an open question.

No assistance to the Cuban Council of Churches

New measures are called for even against Cuban churches, through a tightening of regulations for the export of humanitarian items to ensure that exports are not consigned to entities that are "regime administered or controlled organizations, such as the Cuban Council of Churches." This follows on denial of visas to various members of the Cuban Council of Churches, which the Bush administration insists is controlled by the Cuban government. As an American religious leader countered heatedly: "In that they have to play by the rules laid down by the Cuban government, they are of course 'controlled.' But to suggest that the Cuban Council of Churches is simply an instrument of the government is

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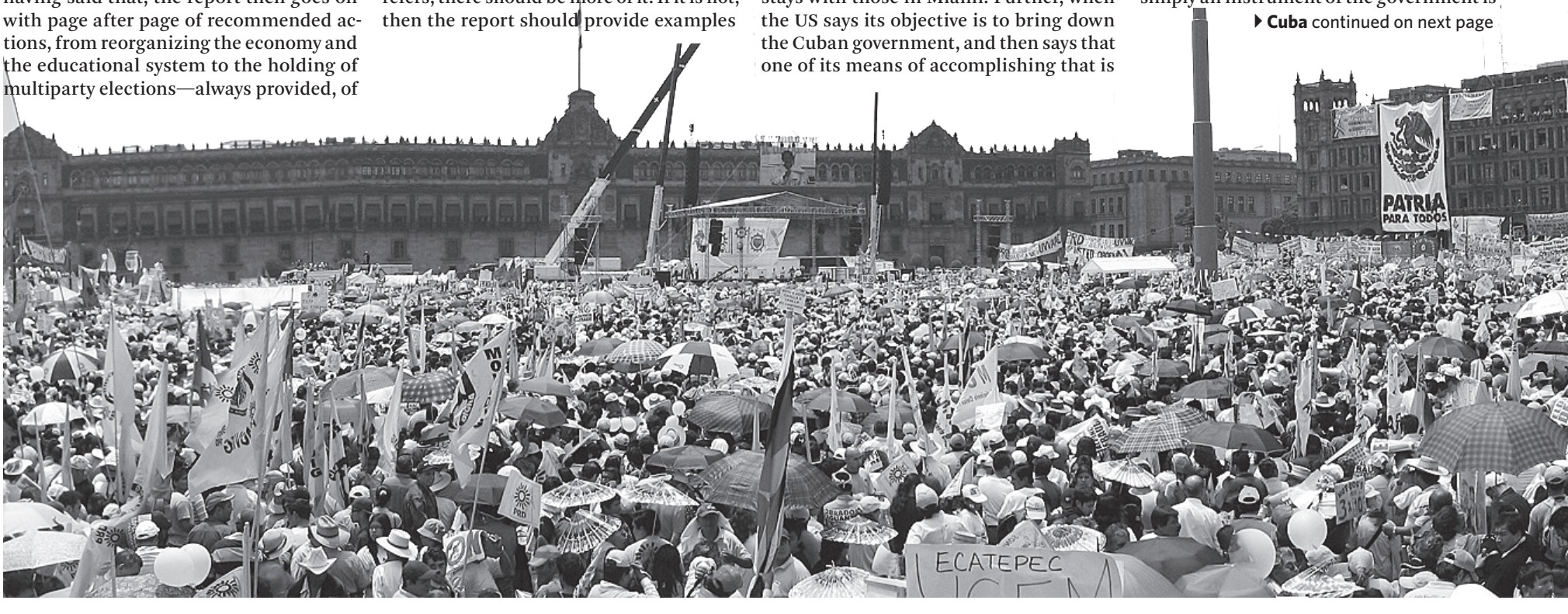

▸ **Cuba** continued from previous page

absurd. They are legitimate religious leaders whose cooperation we highly value."

Be that as it may, American churches will no longer be able to send the Cuban Council of Churches humanitarian assistance, a prohibition the US-based Church World Service is already vigorously protesting.

Effort to monitor nickel exports

Given that nickel exports are now such an important source of revenues for the Cuban government, the Commission report calls for the creation an inter-agency Cuban Nickel Targeting Task Force to strengthen measures to control imports of nickel-bearing substances or products (i.e., "we won't buy your steel if there's any chance it contains Cuban nickel!"), and for several other measures to discourage other countries from buying Cuban nickel. Such tactics have been tried in years past with very little success. They are not likely to have any greater success now. Indeed, they are more likely to cause a strong negative reaction in the international community.

Reaction of the Cuban people to efforts to undermine their economy

One must wonder also how the Bush administration expects the Cuban people to react to its call for measures which can only have the purpose of making their own lives more difficult? Are they supposed to be grateful to the United States should its policies result in new shortages and thus be ready to support its campaign against their own government? Not likely. On the contrary, fostering a siege mentality in Cuba can only work against any popular support for US policy.

The secret annex

The measures to block the succession process that are discussed in this report—or, at least those that are openly discussed—aren't likely to work. However, the report carries an annex which it is said must remain secret for "reasons of national security" and to maximize its chances of success. We can only guess what is in the annex. Given the history of US–Cuban relations, however, there will inevitably be speculation that it contains new assassination plots against Castro (although this time against Raul) and new plans for exile raids if not direct US military action. There is already virtually no support in the international community for US policy toward Cuba. The uncertainty and suspicion resulting from this secret annex are likely to reduce it even further.

Wayne S. Smith is now a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Policy and perhaps the most veteran US observer of US–Cuban relations, having been a Cuba analyst in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (1957–58), Third Secretary of Political Affairs in the American Embassy in Havana (1958–61), Cuban Desk Officer (1964–66), Director of Cuban Affairs in the Department of State (1977–79), and Chief of the US Interests Section Havana, 1979–82.

Too busy making history

A popular teachers' movement upsets the status quo in Oaxaca and beyond

by Rochelle Gause

The day after arriving in Mexico City, as I stood in a crowd of half a million Mexican supporters who had traveled from all over the country, presidential candidate Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador made his demand for a vote-by-vote recount of the July 2 election. According to journalist John Ross, who has covered Mexico for many years, "This country is absolutely divided right down the center, between the industrial north and the indigenous, impoverished, but resource-rich south. It's an election that has split the county right down the line geographically, politically, economically and racially." Obrador represents a shift to the left, supporting the poor, in alignment with the new left democracies in Latin America, although some members of popular movements consider him closer to the center. His opposition, Felipe Calderón, represents neoliberalism and continued alignment with George Bush and Washington. Obrador has refused to concede defeat in the election, where Calderon led by little more than half a percentage point amidst claims of ballot stuffing and corruption. Speaking to the crowd, Obrador stated, "I have the deep conviction that despite all the machinery of the state and all the money of a privileged group, they will not be able to stop the free will of millions of Mexicans. That is the greatest force of a democracy." A call was made for peaceful civil disobedience in defense of democracy and another rally on July 30. The electoral court, itself accused of being in the hands of the right-wing parties, is reviewing the accounts of fraud and corruption and has until September 6 to certify a winner.

> "I have the deep conviction that despite all the machinery of the state and all the money of a privileged group, they will not be able to stop the free will of millions of Mexicans. That is the greatest force of a democracy."
>
> —*Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador*

In Oaxaca, the fifth largest state in Mexico, Obrador received the vast majority of the votes, a surprising loss for a traditional conservative party stronghold. This upset is being credited primarily to a growing popular movement currently represented by a statewide strike of the democratic teachers union SNTE Section 22 in Oaxaca. On May 22 the union declared the strike and established an encampment of 70,000 teachers in the center of the city, taking over the Zócalo, the main square, and almost 50 surrounding streets to publicize and emphasize their demands. These demands include an increase in salaries to reach the level of teachers in the neighboring states of Chiapas and Veracruz, as required by the Mexican constitution; equal salary for equal work; and that all children receive breakfast, school uniforms, shoes, books, writing implements and minimally adequate school buildings. The Mexican constitution demands that all children have the same access to education. This is not the case today where children come to school hungry, barefoot and without desks, books and pencils.

The huge encampment and the growing social movement pose a threat to the far right conservative Oaxacan government and the industries it represents. On June 14 they responded to the strikers with repression. At 4:30 in the morning more than 3000 armed police officers attacked the sleeping teachers and families with helicopters, teargas, stun grenades, rifles, and clubs. Many tents and teachers' belongings were burnt. The grassroots radio station Radio Plantón was destroyed. Support for the teachers spread quickly and a march was held on June 16 with over 400,000 in attendance. The teachers and their supporters quickly reclaimed the center square, and although many teachers recently returned to their regions briefly to assist students in fulfilling their academic requirements so they can continue to the next grade, the encampment continues. A new entity, the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO), was formed from the 350 organizations that mobilized alongside the teacher strike, and through consensus they have decided to change the primary demand to the resignation of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz, the Governor of Oaxaca, not only because of his responsibility in the violent repression of their democratic strike, but because he too was brought to power through fraud, and since the beginning of his term he has favored corporate interests and undermined social organizations.

The violent repression did not succeed in forcing the teachers out of Oaxaca City, so the tactics used to discredit the movement were expanded. Businessmen closely allied with Ulises sponsored the "March in Defense of Education" where workers were threatened with the loss of their jobs if they did not attend and many reported promises of money, eyeglasses, cement, mattresses and food. The march was attended by fewer than 10,000.

In order to pit tourists against the union, Ulises announced on July 17 that he was suspending Guelaguetza, an internationally popular cultural festival that draws over 20,000 tourists each year, "because of fears that thousands of striking teachers will threaten tourists." When I walk through the sea of artistic banners and tarps that make up the encampment, I feel no threat. Rather I am greeted with many signs hung by the teachers' union in English, stating, "Sorry for the annoyances. What is happening is that we are busy making our history. As soon as Ulises gets out of here, we will welcome you again with open arms—the Citizens of Oaxaca."

The teachers had called for a boycott of the festival prior to the Governor's suspension in opposition to the high costs of the festival, to the profits benefiting only the travel agencies, transnational enterprises, and wealthy hotel and restaurant owners. The ethnic groups of the region express concern over being reduced to mere tourist and folk merchandise. Rather than posing a threat to tourists, the teachers have planned an alternative popular, free and inclusive festival to occur on July 24.

Although this is my first trip to Mexico, in the last week I have felt the tremendous strength of the popular movement – the spirit, solidarity, creativity and persistence. Whether or not justice is served in the presidential election or in the meeting of the Oaxacan teachers' demands, it is clear to me that no amount of corruption or repression will stop the momentum that is building. As Ana, a member of the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca, explained to me, "...wherever there is misery living together with wealth – extreme poverty and extreme wealth – there will always be social conflict. It is hard to have a situation of peace when people are hungry, when they don't have access to even basic services."

Rochelle Gause is a former resident of Olympia and is a member of the Olympia–Rafah Sister City Project.

A crowd of over one million converged in the center square of Mexico City in support of Obrador on July 16. (photo provided by Rochelle Gause)

What the media isn't telling you about Lebanon

Five myths that sanction Israel's war crimes

by Jonathan Cook

This week I had the pleasure to appear on American radio, on the *Laura Ingraham Show*, pitted against David Horowitz, a "Semite supremacist" who most recently made his name leading McCarthyite witch-hunts against American professors who have the impertinence to suggest that maybe, just maybe, Arabs have minds and feelings like the rest of us.

It was a revealing experience, at least for a British journalist rarely exposed to the depths of ignorance and prejudice in the United States on Middle East matters—well, apart from the regular wackos who fill my email in-tray. But five minutes of listening to Horowitz speak, and the sympathy with which his arguments were greeted by Laura ("*The Professors*—your book's a great read, David"), left me a lot more frightened about the world's future.

Horowitz's response to every question, every development in the Middle East, whether it concerns Lebanon, the Palestinians, Syria or Iran, is the same: "They want to drive the Jews into the sea." It's as simple as that. Not even a superficial attempt at analysis; just the message that the Arab world is trying to finish off the genocide started by Europe. And if Laura is any yardstick, a lot of Americans buy that stuff.

Horowitz is keen to bang the square peg of the Lebanon story into the round hole of his claims that the "Jews" are facing an imminent genocide in the Middle East. And to help him, he and the massed ranks of US apologists for Israel—regulars, I suspect, of shows like Laura's—are promoting at least four myths regarding Hizbullah's current rockets strikes on Israel. Unless they are challenged at every turn, the danger is that they will win the ground war against common sense in the US.

The first myth is that Israel was forced to pound Lebanon with its military hardware because Hizbullah began "raining down" rockets on the Galilee. Anyone with a short memory can probably recall that was not the first justification we were offered: that had to do with the two soldiers captured by Hizbullah on a border post on July 12.

But presumably Horowitz and his friends realized that 400 Lebanese dead and counting in little more than a week was hard to sell as a "proportionate" response. In any case Hizbullah kept telling the world how keen it was to return the soldiers in a prisoner swap. Hundreds of dead in Lebanon, at least 1,000 severely injured and more than half a million refugees—all because Israel is not ready to sit down at the negotiating table. Even Horowitz could not "advocate for Israel" on that one.

So the chronology of war has been reorganized: now we are being told that Israel was forced to attack Lebanon to defend itself from the barrage of Hizbullah rockets falling on Israeli civilians. The international community is buying the argument hook, line and sinker. "Israel has the right to defend itself," says every politician who can find a microphone to talk into. But, if we cast our minds back, that is not how the "Middle East crisis," as TV channels now describe it, started. It is worth recapping on those early events (and I won't document the long history of Lebanese suffering at Israel's hands that preceded it) before they become entirely shrouded in the mythology being peddled by Horowitz and others.

Early on July 12 Hizbullah launched a raid against an army border post, in what was in the best interpretation a foolhardy violation of Israeli sovereignty. In the fighting the Shiite militia killed three soldiers and captured two others, while Hizbullah fired a few mortars at border areas in what the Israeli army described at the time as "diversionary tactics". As a result of the shelling, five Israelis were "lightly injured", with most needing treatment for shock, according to the Haaretz newspaper.

Israel's immediate response was to send a tank into Lebanon in pursuit of the Hizbullah fighters (its own foolhardy violation of Lebanese sovereignty). The tank ran over a landmine, which exploded killing four soldiers inside. Another soldier died in further clashes inside Lebanon as his unit tried to retrieve the bodies. Rather than open diplomatic channels to calm the violence down and start the process of getting its soldiers back, Israel launched bombing raids deep into Lebanese territory the same day. Given Israel's world view that it alone has a right to project power and fear, that might have been expected.

But the next day Israel continued its rampage across the south and into Beirut, where the airport, roads, bridges, and power stations were pummelled. We now know from reports in the US media that the Israeli army had been planning such a strike against Lebanon for at least a year.

In contrast to the image of Hizbullah frothing at the mouth to destroy Israel, its leader Hassan Nasrallah held off from serious retaliation. For the first day and a half, he limited his strikes to the northern border areas, which have faced Hizbullah attacks in the past and are well protected.

He waited till late on June 13 before turning his guns on Haifa, even though we now know he could have targeted Israel's third largest city from the outset. A small volley of rockets directed at Haifa caused no injuries and looked more like a warning than an escalation.

It was another three days—days of constant Israeli bombardmeent of Lebanon, destroying the country and injuring countless civilians—before Nasrallah hit Haifa again, including a shell that killed eight workers in a railway depot.

No one should have been surprised. Nasrallah was doing exactly what he had threatened to do if Israel refused to negotiate and chose the path of war instead. Although the international media quoted his ominous televised message that "Haifa is just the beginning," Nasrallah in fact made his threat conditional on Israel's continuing strikes against Lebanon. In the same speech he warned: "As long as the enemy pursues its aggression without limits and red lines, we will pursue the confrontation without limits and red lines." Well, Israel did, and so now has Nasrallah.

The second myth is that Hizbullah's stockpile of 12,000 rockets—the Israeli army's estimate—poses an existential threat to Israel. According to Horowitz and others, Hizbullah collected its armoury with the sole intent of destroying the Jewish state.

If this really was Hizbullah's intention in amassing the weapons, it has a very deluded view of what is required to wipe Israel off the map. More likely, it collected the armory in the hope that it might prove a deterrence—even if a very inadequate one, as Lebanon is now discovering—against a repeat of Israel's invasions of 1978 and 1982, and the occupation that lasted nearly two decades afterwards.

In fact, according to other figures supplied by the Israeli army, at least 2,000 Hizbullah rockets have already been fired into Israel while the army's bombardments have so far destroyed a further 2,000 rockets. In other words, northern Israel has already received a fifth of Hizbullah's arsenal. As someone living in the north, and within range of the rockets, I have to say Israel does not look close to being expunged. The Galilee may be emptier, as up to a third of Israeli Jews seek temporary refuge in the south, but Israel's existence is in no doubt at all.

The third myth is that, while Israel is trying to fight a clean war by targeting only terrorists, Hizbullah prefers to bring death and destruction on innocents by firing rockets at Israeli civilians.

It is amazing that this myth even needs exploding, but after the efforts of Horowitz & co. it most certainly does. As the civilian death toll in Lebanon has rocketed, international criticism of Israel has remained at the mealy-mouthed level of diplomatic requests for "restraint" and "proportionate responses." One need only cast a quick eye over the casualty figures from this conflict to see that if Israel is targeting only Hizbullah fighters it has been making disastrous miscalculations. So far some 400 Lebanese civilians are reported dead—unfortunately for Horowitz's story at least a third of them children. From the images coming out of Lebanon's hospitals, many more children have survived but with terrible burns or disabling injuries.

The best estimates—though no one knows for sure—are that Hizbullah deaths are not yet close to the three-figures range.

In the latest emerging news from Lebanon, human rights groups are accusing Israel of violating international law and using cluster grenades, which kill indiscriminately. There are reports too, so far unconfirmed, that Israel has been firing illegal phosphorus incendiary bombs.

Conversely, the breakdown of the smaller number of deaths of Israelis at the hands of Hizbullah—42 at the time of writing—show that more soldiers have been killed than civilians.

In fact, although no one is making the point, Hizbullah's rockets have been targeted overwhelming at strategic locations: the northern economic hub of Haifa, its satellite towns and the array of military sites across the Galilee.

Nasrallah seems fully aware that Israel has an impressive civil defense program of shelters that keep most civilians out of harm's way. Unlike Horowitz I won't presume to read Nasrallah's mind: whether he wants to kill large numbers of Israeli civilians or not cannot be known, given his inability to do so.

But we can see from the choice of the

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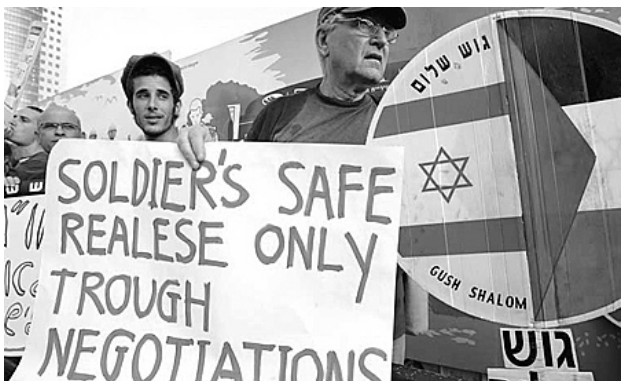

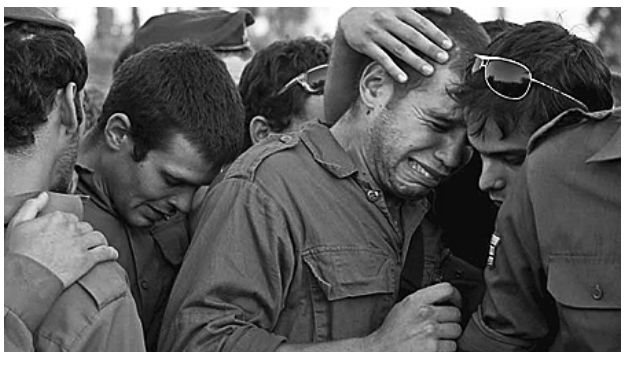

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sites he is striking that his primary goal is to give Israelis a small taste of the disruption of normal life that is being endured by the Lebanese. He has effectively closed Haifa for more than a week, shutting its port and financial centres. Israeli TV is speaking increasingly of the damage being inflicted on the country's economy. Because of Israel's press censorship laws, it is impossible to discuss the locations of Israel's military installations. But Hizbullah's rockets are accurate enough to show that many are intended for the army's sites in the Galilee, even if they are rarely precise enough to hit them.

It is obvious to everyone in Nazareth, for example, that the rockets landing close by, and once on, the city over the past week are searching out, and some have fallen extremely close to, the weapons factory sited near us.

Hizbullah seems to have as little concern for the collateral damage of civilian deaths as Israel—each wants the balance of terror in its favour—but it is nonsense to suggest that Hizbullah's goals are any more ignoble than Israel's. It is trying to dent the economy of northern Israel in retaliation for Israel's total destruction of the Lebanese economy. Equally, it is trying to show Israel that it knows where its military installations are to be found. Both strategies appear to be having an impact, even if a minor one, on weakening Israeli resolve.

The fourth myth is a continuation of the third: Hizbullah has been endangering the lives of ordinary Lebanese by hiding among non-combatants.

We have seen this kind of dissembling by Israel and Horowitz before, though not repeated so enthusiastically by Western officials. The UN head of humanitarian affairs, Jan Egeland, who is in the region, accused Hizbullah of "cowardly blending" among the civilian population, and a similar accusation was leveled by the British foreign minister Kim Howells when he arrived in Israel.

In 2002 Israel made the same charge: that Palestinians resisting its army's rampage through the refugee camps of the West Bank were hiding among civilians. The claim grew louder as more Palestinian civilians showed the irritating habit of getting in the way of Israeli strikes against population centres. The complaints reached a crescendo when at least two dozen civilians were killed in Jenin as Israel razed the camp with Apache helicopters and Caterpillar bulldozers.

The implication of Egeland's cowardly statement seems to be that any Lebanese fighter, or Palestinian one, resisting Israel and its powerful military should stand in an open field, his rifle raised to the sky, waiting to see who fares worse in a shootout with an Apache helicopter or F-16 fighter jet. Hizbullah's reluctance to conduct the war in this manner, we are supposed to infer, is proof that they are terrorists.

Egeland and Howells need reminding that Hizbullah's fighters are not aliens recently arrived from training camps in Iran, whatever Horowitz claims. They belong to and are strongly supported by the Shiite community, nearly half the country's population, and many other Lebanese. They have families, friends and neighbors living alongside them in the country's south and the neighbourhoods of Beirut who believe Hizbullah is the best hope of defending their country from Israel's regular onslaughts.

Given the indigenous nature of Hizbullah's resistance, we should not be surprised at the lengths the Shiite militia is going to ensure their loved ones, and the Lebanese people more generally, are not put directly in danger by their combat.

If only the same could be said of the Israeli army and air force. One need only look at the images of the victims of its strikes against residential neighborhoods, car, ambulances and factories to see why most of the dead being extracted from the rubble are civilians.

And finally, there is a fifth myth I almost forgot to mention. That people like David Horowitz only want to tell us the truth.

Jonathan Cook is a writer and journalist based in Nazareth, Israel. His book *Blood and Religion: The Unmasking of the Jewish and Democatic State*, is published by Pluto Press. His website is *www.jkcook.net*.

Above: "Stand With Israel" rally, July 17, NY.

Facing page, from left to right, top row to bottom: Tyre, Lebanon, July 15; Tel Aviv, June 29; Gaza Strip; Two men mourn the deaths of three children, killed after an Israeli jet dropped a bomb on a canal in Tyre, Lebanon; Ali Ghraieb, age 9, Sidon, Lebanon; Lebanon; Lebanese men evacuate a wounded woman from a wrecked car; Israeli soldiers grieve for the loss of their colleague Yonatan Hadassi who was killed July 19 in a gun battle with Hezbollah fighters; injured children in the emergency room in Sidon.

Bottom photos: Zahra al-Samra, 18, and her brother—their mother and sister were killed in an Israeli airstrike in Tyre two days earlier; Lebanese family fleeing Tyre; woman stares motionless while behind her a boy pleads with his mother not to die, Tyre.

Quotes of the century

"To those countries who claim we are using disproportionate force, I have only this to say: you're damn right we are!"
—**Dan Gillerman**, Israeli Ambassador to the UN, at the New York "Stand With Israel" rally, July 17. His remarks were received by a roar of applause.

"Israel is...gentrifying a pretty bad neighborhood."
—**Richard Cohen**, *Washington Post*, July 25

"What we're seeing here, in a sense, is the growing—the birth pangs of a new Middle East."
—**Condoleezza Rice**, July 21

"We will stand with Israel because Israel is standing for American values as well as Israeli [values]."
—**Hillary Clinton**, "Stand With Israel" rally

"We need a new vocabulary to reflect the realities of modern warfare. A new phrase should be introduced into the reporting and analysis of current events in the Middle East: "*the continuum of civilianality*.'"
—**Alan Dershowitz**, attempting to explain why civilians killed by Israel are not really civilians

WITTY PARABLES, PETTY ANALYSIS

What you're not hearing about Gaza

by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)

On July 16, CBS *Face the Nation* host (and *CBS Evening News* anchor) Bob Schieffer dedicated the entire Sunday morning news show to the Middle East conflict. In his closing editorial, he adapted a well-known fable in an attempt to explain the causes of the current conflict—or rather, the lack of causes:

> Finally today, when the war broke out in the Middle East, the first thing I thought about was the old story of the frog and the scorpion who were trying to cross a river there. The scorpion couldn't swim, the frog was lost. So the scorpion proposed a deal, "Give me a ride on your back, and I'll show you the way." The frog agreed, and the trip went fine until they got to the middle of the river, and then suddenly the scorpion just stung the frog. As they were sinking, the frog asked, in his dying breath, "Why would you do that?" To which the scorpion replied, "Because this is the Middle East."

Lest there be any doubt about who is the frog and who is the scorpion in that parable, Schieffer went on to spell it out:

> It is worth noting that the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip did not kidnap that Israeli soldier and provoke all of this because the Israelis were invading Gaza. No, all this happened in the wake of the Israeli withdrawal, which was what the Palestinians supposedly wanted. But this is the Middle East. Why would fundamentalists in Gaza and Lebanon choose to provoke this war at this time? There is no real answer except this is the Middle East.

Schieffer was echoing the media's conventional wisdom in portraying the Palestinian raid that captured the Israeli soldier as an inexplicable provocation. The *New York Times*, in a June 29 editorial headlined "Hamas Provokes a Fight," declared that "the responsibility for this latest escalation rests squarely with Hamas," adding that "an Israeli military response was inevitable."

The media assumption is that in withdrawing from Gaza in September 2005, Israel ended its conflict with at least that portion of Palestine and gave up, as Schieffer put it, "what the Palestinians supposedly wanted." In reality, however, since the pullout and before the recent escalation of violence, at least 144 Palestinians in Gaza had been killed by Israeli forces, often by helicopter gunships, according to a list compiled by the Israeli human rights group B'tselem. Only 31 percent of the people killed were engaged in hostile actions at the time of their deaths, and 25 percent of all those killed were minors.

From the time of the pullout until the recent upsurge in violence, according to B'tselem's lists, no Israelis were killed by violence emanating from Gaza. Although during this period Palestinian militants launched some 1,000 crude Kasam missiles from Gaza into Israel, no fatalities resulted; at the same time, Israel fired 7,000 to 9,000 heavy artillery shells into Gaza. On June 9, just two weeks before the Hamas raid that killed two Israeli soldiers and captured a third, an apparent Israeli missile strike killed seven members of a Palestinian family picnicking on a Gaza beach, which prompted Hamas to end its 16-month-old informal ceasefire with Israel. (Though Israel has denied responsibility for the killings, a Human Rights Watch investigation strongly challenged the denial, calling the likelihood of Israel not being responsible "remote"; Human Rights Watch, 6/15/06.) Hamas has repeatedly pointed to the Gaza beach incident as one of the central events that prompted its cross-border raid—indeed, Schieffer's own *CBS Evening News* has reported that claim (*CBS Evening News*, 6/25/06). Even so, Schieffer seems unable to recall this recent event (see FAIR Action Alert, 6/30/06).

Hamas also points to the capture of some of its leaders by Israel as the provocation for its raid. If Israelis had every right, as Schieffer said, to respond with force to the capture of one soldier by Hamas, then how are Palestinians expected to feel about the more than 9,000 prisoners captured and held by Israel—including 342 juveniles and over 700 held without trial (Mandela Institute for Human Rights, 4/30/06)?

Moreover, Israel's withdrawal did not remotely give Palestinians "what they wanted." In addition to its continued deadly attacks on Gaza, Israel has continued to control Gaza's borders and has withheld tens of millions of dollars of tax revenue in response to Hamas' victory in democratic elections in January 2006. Israel's actions crippled the Gaza economy and prompting warnings from the UN of a looming humanitarian disaster (UNRWA, 7/8/06).

None of this is to say that Hamas, which has regularly ignored the distinction between military and civilian targets, does not share part of the blame for the current crisis. But to act as though Israel had been behaving as a peace-loving neighbor to Gaza until the soldier's capture is a willful rewriting of very recent history. The most Schieffer can bring himself to say about Israel is this:

> Israel had every right to respond, and it did. But again, this is the Middle East, so perhaps a response may have made it all worse by giving moderate Arabs in the region an excuse to distance themselves from Israel.

Israel's "response" has resulted in the deaths to date of at least 103 Palestinians, while no Israelis have died other than one soldier killed by friendly fire (*New York Times*, 7/19/06). Meanwhile, Israel has also destroyed Gaza's main power plant and its water system, leaving tens of thousands of Gaza families without access to food, water and medical care (Oxfam, 7/19/06). In Lebanon, Israel has killed over 300 people, the vast majority of them civilians, wounded over 1000 and displaced half a million (MSNBC, 7/19/06). To call such devastation an "excuse" for Arabs to "distance themselves from Israel" is a trivialization of real human suffering. [*Since the release of this article, these numbers have increased dramatically, with the exception of the number of Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza, which remains at one—by friendly fire.*]

Why is Bob Schieffer allowed to get away with such shallow, dismissive coverage of complicated and tragic events? Because it's the Middle East.

Visit the FAIR website at www.fair.org

A call for leadership in the current Middle East escalation

On July 18 and 19, the US Senate unanimously and the House near-unanimously passed AIPAC-backed resolutions in complete support of Israeli aggression in the Middle East. Meanwhile, concerned voters have composed a letter calling for more responsible leadership from local elected representatives in the escalating crisis.

To add your name to the letter, email ammurano@gmail.com and include your name, address, and congressional district, as soon as possible.

To the Honorable Senators Murray and Cantwell and Representatives Baird and Smith:

We write as constituents who are gravely concerned by the escalating violence in Israel, Palestine, and Lebanon and by the lack of an adequate US response to the situation. Our concern extends to all of the people in the region. We oppose the human rights violations being committed on all sides, but we are shocked by the Israeli military's ongoing, disproportionate actions against civilians in Palestine and Lebanon and by the devastating destruction of civilian infrastructure in both places.

Writing about the assault on Gaza, Rabbi Michael Lerner wrote, "This is a defining moment in our relationship with Israel for all Americans of whatever faith. Just as we need to make clear to our own government that its human rights violations in Guantanamo and Iraq are unacceptable, so we need to communicate to the Israeli people that the mass punishment of a million people for the acts of a few is as unacceptable when it comes from a democratic society as when it comes from the willful oppression of entrenched authoritarian dictators."

As a US lawmaker, you are in a unique position to challenge the current situation by insisting that both sides in the conflict uphold international law and respect for basic rights. To that end, we ask that you, our elected representative, take the following steps:

1) In the strongest possible terms, insist that Israel immediately end its assault on Gaza and Lebanon and seek a negotiated, diplomatic solution to the current problems. Those negotiations should address the following:

a) Safe return of Israeli soldiers, but also the release of illegally held Palestinian political prisoners, especially minors.

b) The immediate halt of the Israeli shelling of Gaza that has occurred consistently for the past months; and the immediate cessation of all rocket fire at Israeli towns.

2) Communicate to Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice and President Bush that an immediate ceasefire, diplomacy and negotiations, not support for continuing violence, must be the route to resolving current issues. Ask them to demand that Israel stop its disproportionate assaults on Gaza and Lebanon and to insist that all civilians (Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese) are protected.

3) Take action in Congress to address the Israeli Government's violations of the US Arms Export Control Act and Foreign Assistance Act during the recent assaults. Furthermore, hold the Israeli Government accountable for these violations by cutting off financial and military aid as required by US law.

4) We understand that the Gaza electrical generating plant destroyed by Israel was originally built by Enron, and later bought out by Morganti, a Connecticut company that insured the plant for $48 million through the US taxpayer-funded Overseas Private Insurance Corporation (OPIC), the US government-sponsored "insurance agency of last resort." We further understand that after Israel used US taxpayer-funded F-16 bombers, Apache helicopters, and hellfire missiles to destroy the US-built plant, Morganti notified OPIC that it wants $48 million in insurance money. Please investigate the facts of this situation, and if they are true, call for the Israeli government to pay this $48 million—if necessary, out of the annual $3 billion in military aid to Israel. Please also investigate the implications to American taxpayers and to future US projects in Gaza should OPIC end up footing this bill instead of the Israeli Government.

5) Finally, when you are back in the district, we request a meeting with you personally to discuss your responses to this letter, your positions on this issue, and how we might best help to keep you informed about it.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Your Constituents

About a hundred concerned people demonstrated at Percival Landing on July 19 to call for an immediate Middle East cease-fire and for the US to end its decades-long support of the Israeli military occupation. (photo by Sandy Mayes)

Tune in to progressive programming on TCTV

As the corporate media becomes evermore consolidated and powerful, and what little public access to cable TV and other broadcast media does exist is being threatened, our own local-access TV station remains a vital resource for the grassroots. Many local progressive organizations produce programs seen on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), cable channel 22 (only in Thurston County). Here is a sampling of regular monthly programs scheduled for July through December 2006:

Reclaiming Democracy is a new program which focuses on how the power of corporations undermines electoral Democracy. Mondays, 6:00 am and Fridays, 6:00 pm.

The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation program on peace and social justice issues has been running since 1986—the longest continuous program series on TCTV. Mondays 1:30 pm and Thursdays 9:00 pm. The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation also sponsors a series of independent documentaries every Sunday at 10:00 pm.

Green Issues Forum is another new program. Mondays 5:00 pm and Wednesdays 9:00 pm.

Progressive Roundtable Forum usually covers local issues and actions. Tuesdays 8:00 pm and Wednesdays 12:30 pm.

Wings of Honor is produced by Veterans for Peace, Rachel Corrie Chapter 109. Thursdays 8:00 am and Fridays 10:00 pm. They also have many video links on their website: *www.VFP109.org* .

Our View is a fifteen minute program on labor issues produced by the Washington Federation of State Employees. Mondays 6:00 pm and Tuesdays 7:00 am.

Democracy Now! is a daily national news program which runs live at 5:00 am and repeats at 4:00 pm weekdays.

Local forums and presentations are often taped for Thurston Community Television and given eight airings at a variety of times. The TCTV program schedule is published in the Sunday *Olympian* "TV Week" and can be found at *www.tctv.net* .

All the local shows listed above need crews for studio production and videotaping. It's easy to take the training and get involved. Call TCTV at 956-3100.

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▸ **Port of Olympia** continued from page 1

approval for its use of force against Iraq. Despite the fact that the council consists of some of its closest allies, the US was not willing to risk the possibility of being officially denied approval for the invasion. As well, any open discussion of a war against Iraq would have provoked embarrassing questions about US aggression and dominance. And deferring to the channels established in the UN would have required the US to concede some of its authority to another governing body, something that the US—the State that rules States—is not willing to do.

Self-defense. Evaluating the argument for self-defense is usually a little more tricky. No law provides a completely objective standard. But typically, as Howard Friel and international law expert Richard Falk point out, a "heavy burden of persuasion is on the state claiming exception." The threat to that country must be imminent and attempts at peaceful methods must have failed. The Bush administration failed to satisfy either of these requirements.

Deception in defense of invasion

Early on, the Bush administration claimed it faced an imminent threat from Iraq, citing alledged connections between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaeda, along with claims of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. None of these claims were valid, and outside of the American propaganda system, they were easily and frequently refuted. Later on, the exposure of the Downing Street memo in the British press—which revealed that the Bush administration was planning with the Blair government to attack Iraq as early as July 2002—rendered the so-called "imminent threat" argument even more transparently farcical than it was to begin with.

In fact, the argument that the war was fought for self-defense was so problematic that the Bush administration eventually abandoned it altogether, later claiming that the war in Iraq was a "preemptive war" fought in "anticipatory self-defense," which Condolezza Rice defined as "the right of the United States to attack a country that it thinks could attack it first." Thus, the reason for going to war was the toppling of the former Iraqi government because someday Iraq may attack us. This represents an impudent and broad doctrine of use of force. Serious attempts at peaceful methods of conflict resolution were not even considered.

Finally, after the weapons of mass destruction failed to materialize and the al-Qaeda link was discredited, the Bush administration claimed that the primary objective of the invasion was to "spread democracy." Although this bait-and-switch rationale was readily accepted in the US corporate media and by the majority in Congress, the people of Iraq have easily seen through such blatant manipulations. In several polls they have indicated a belief that US intentions are directed primarily at securing control of the country's oil resources and generally establishing dominance over the Middle East.

Multiple levels of US non-compliance

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan declared in 2004 that the US invasion of Iraq "was not in conformity with the UN Charter, and from our point of view... illegal." One might expand on Annan's remarks and note that not only was the war itself a violation of the UN Charter, but that there are many other violations of international law in how the occupation has been carried out. These include the use of white phosphorous (in violation of Article 2 of Protocol III: Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of Incendiary Weapons); torture at Abu Ghraib, (violations of Geneva III); recruitment of the Iraqi police force to work with the United States Army (violation of Article 50 of Geneva IV); the use of hospitals as military outposts (violation of Article 18 of Geneva IV); attacks on cities like Fallujah, (violation of Article 51 of Geneva I), and, tragically, many more. It is likely that if the Port of Olympia were to continue to send shipments to Iraq, the port commissioners would effectively be abetting the US military in perpetuating such crimes.

Are the Port Commissioners complicit?

Whether or not the Port of Olympia Commissioners could be found guilty of complicity with war crimes depends on the legal potency of the Nuremberg Principles. There are two Principles established during the Nuremberg Tribunals that are relevant to this case: Principles II and VII.

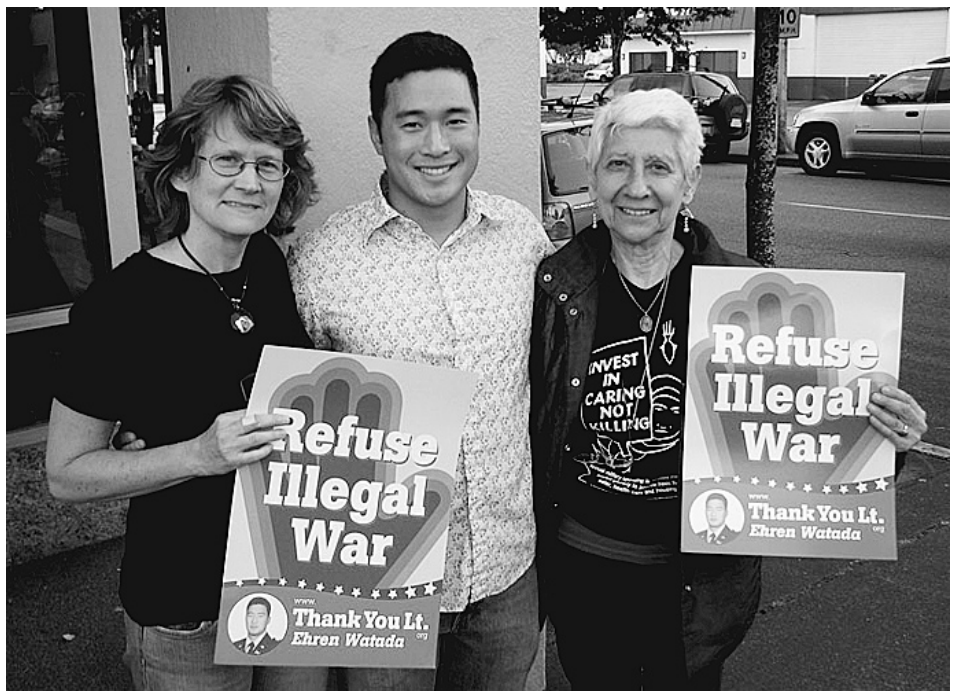
Principle II established that government officials are not absolved from their commitment to international law merely because of related "official" duties. In other words, international law takes precedent over all national and domestic laws. In the United States, this Principle is reinforced by the Constitution. According to Article VI of the US Constitution, "all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land." Following orders, or even doing what is in the best interest of your government, are not excuses. Governing officials must address international law with the same reverence and rigor with which they would be expected to treat the First Amendment.

Principle VII of Nuremberg is unequivocal: "Complicity in the commission of a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity... is a crime under international law." Principle VII prohibits anyone from directly contributing in any way to any person or governing body committing war crimes. If high US officials, members of the Bush administration and others, are ever convicted of war crimes, then the Port of Olympia Commissioners could be found guilty, too.

What can be done?

If what the Port of Olympia is doing is wrong according to international law, then what can the people of Thurston County do about it? Since there are currently no meaningful international checks on the policies and behaviors of the world's only remaining superpower, the only real hope is for its citizens to take the reins. In the long term, we must work to create major fundamental democratic improvements in our social and political institutions. In the short term, we must respond creatively and strategically as events unfold.

Lt. Watada has described United States military conduct in Iraq as the "wholesale slaughter and mistreatment of the Iraqi people." Risking severe personal consequences, his courageous refusal to participate in this criminal war is an immensely important act of resistance. As well, citizen protest at the Port of Olympia is an important and necessary step in resolving the tension between conscience and obedience, and moving us toward a more perfect democracy. For these reasons, and for the sake of human decency, let us make sure it continues.



Lt. Ehren Watada with Phoebe Jones (left) and Selma James (right) of the Global Women's Strike, on June 21, 2006. (photo by Jeff Paterson)

Stand up for Lt. Watada on August 16

Support Ft. Lewis war resister as he faces his pre-trial hearing

On August 17, US Army First Lieutenant Ehren Watada will face a pre-trial hearing for refusing to deploy to Iraq. "It is my conclusion as an officer of the armed forces that the war in Iraq is not only morally wrong but a horrible breach of American law. The war and what we're doing over there is illegal," explained the first military officer to publicly take such a stand.

On August 16, the day prior to the hearing, the national organization, Friends and Family of Lt. Ehren Watada, is calling for a "National Day of Education" on issues of national and international law. The group is encouraging people to gather to discuss the question, "Is the war illegal?"

The Army has formally charged Lt. Watada with two counts of making "contemptuous words" towards President Bush. One of these charges is likely due to Lt. Watada's statement that "our government led us into war based on misrepresentations and lies." This is the first known prosecution of this "criminal violation" (Article 88 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice) since 1965. Could it be that because this opinion is so widely shared, it is so threatening?

The Army charges that these same words also constitute "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." As such, Lt. Watada now faces over five years in military prison for his opinions alone.

It is Lt. Watada's outspoken stand for truth that has most angered Army brass. Even before he refused to board an Iraq-bound aircraft on June 22 with the 3rd Stryker Brigade, he was already under investigation for expressing his opinions about the war.

In addition to education, people will also be taking action on August 16. At the I-5 Exit 119 bridge at the entrance to Fort Lewis (the DuPont–Steilacoom exit), Washington supporters will gather at 4:00pm for a vigil, with a rally to follow at 6:00pm.

More information about Lt. Watada and the August 16 demonstration at Ft. Lewis at www.thankyoult.org.

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